

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—Tuesday, June 20, 2000

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. ISAKSON).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 20, 2000.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHNNY ISAKSON to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 4475. An act making appropriations for the Department of Transportation and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2001, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate insists upon its amendment to the bill (H.R. 4475) "An Act making appropriations for the Department of Transportation and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2001, and for other purposes," requests a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints Mr. SHELBY, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. BOND, Mr. GORTON, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. CAMPBELL, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. BYRD, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. REID, Mr. KOHL, Mrs. MURRAY, and Mr. INOUE, to be the conferees on the part of the Senate.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 19, 1999, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 25 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 9:50 a.m.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

PUTTING A FACE ON THE VICTIMS OF GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have spent my adult life in public service, but one element that disappoints me is the failure of our society to address the critical problem of reducing gun violence in our society.

Since I started my career, over 1 million Americans have become victims to gun violence. This is more than all the Americans who have died in all the battles since the Civil War.

One of the reasons, I think, that we have failed to make progress in reducing this epidemic of gun violence is because we have failed to put a face on a million victims. One of the things that I would like to do, as a small contribution towards the reduction of this gun violence, is to help put faces on those victims. We cannot afford for them to be anonymous.

Today I would like to spend a couple of minutes talking about young Kevin Imel. He was visiting a school mate during spring vacation. The evening before, an 11-year-old friend had been playing with his parents' gun. The guns were not safely stored. They did not have trigger locks. They had bullets. Kevin was not comfortable and would not play with his friend and made it clear to him.

The next morning as they were watching Saturday cartoons, the friend suggested again that they play with this gun. Kevin was evidently forceful in indicating that one should not play with guns. It angered his 11-year-old classmate, who went to his parents' room while his mother was putting on makeup, marched out of the room with a rifle, announcing, "Kevin, you are dead."

He fired a bullet that went through Kevin's shoulder. His little sister who was there helped carry him to the car, and Kevin bled to death on the way to the hospital.

Kevin Imel's parents are well-known in my community. His mother is characterized with courage and warmth, who helps others by deed and leads by example in terms of leadership of what people in the disabled community can do.

Lon, the father, was a labor leader. He worked for our former colleague, Congresswoman Elizabeth Furse, and he too has been active in the community. Their service is all the more poignant, I think, because their son Kevin today is a series of warm memories and a life tragically cut short rather than growing into adulthood and

being productive and carrying forward himself.

It is time for America to remember the Kevin Imels of this world, to put a face on those million victims. I do think that it is time for our friends in the Republican leadership in this Congress to allow us to deliberate on items that would reduce gun violence. For almost a year now, the conference committee on juvenile crime has not met. The provisions that have passed the Senate, three simple common sense provisions that would help reduce gun violence, that are supported by the overwhelming majority of the Americans and indeed of American gun owners, have not been deliberated. It is time for the Republican leadership to honor the memory of people like Kevin Imel, allow us to deliberate, allow us to put these into action, allow us to help make sure that those million people who have died to gun violence have not died in vain.

IN HONOR OF ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER VETERANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Guam (Mr. UNDERWOOD) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to recognize the contributions of Asian and Pacific Island veterans. Tomorrow, President Clinton will be presenting this Nation's highest military award for valor, the Congressional Medal of Honor, to 21 Asian American veterans who previously won the Distinguished Service Cross.

President Clinton approved the Army's recommendations for the upgrades this past May. Nineteen of the twenty-one veterans were members of the all-Japanese 100th Infantry Battalion, or 442nd Regimental Combat Team. For their size, it was amongst the most highest decorated units in U.S. military history. Members of this noble unit earned an amazing number of decorations, 18,000 individual decorations, including one wartime Medal of Honor, 53 Distinguished Service Crosses, 9,486 Purple Hearts and 7 Presidential Unit Citations, the Nation's top award for combat units.

The upgrading of the medals stems from efforts made by Senator DANIEL AKAKA of Hawaii, who authored the provision in the 1996 Defense Authorization Act mandating a review of the

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

service records of Asian Pacific Americans who received the Distinguished Service Cross.

The recommendation by Secretary of the Army Louis Caldera, and the subsequent order by President Clinton, serves to correct the injustice of racial discrimination that was prevalent against Asian Pacific Americans during World War II. Many of the Japanese Americans who served in the 442nd volunteered from internment camps, where their families had been relocated at the outbreak of the war. These men fought in 8 major campaigns in Italy, France and Germany, including battles at Monte Cassino, Anzio and Biffontaine. Despite the ferocity of the fighting they endured and the degree of bravery exhibited by these men, the climate of racism precluded many from due recognition of their actions under fire. Tomorrow's White House ceremony will finally redress this past wrong.

One of those honored for valor is Senator DANIEL INOUE who distinguished himself when leading his platoon against the enemy at San Terenzo on April 21, 1945. Though hit in the abdomen by a bullet that came out his back and barely missed his spine, he continued to lead the platoon and advanced alone against a machine gun nest that had pinned down his men.

He tossed two hand grenades with devastating effect before his right arm was shattered by a German rifle grenade at close range, according to the senatorial bio. INOUE threw his last grenade with his left hand, attacked with a submachine gun, and was finally knocked down the hill by a bullet in the leg.

After 20 months in Army hospitals, INOUE returned home as a captain with a Distinguished Service Cross, the Nation's second highest award for military valor, the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart with oak leaf cluster and 12 other medals and citations, and of course he now has a distinguished career in the other body.

Many of these names which I will enter into the RECORD will add to the Pantheon of true American heroes, names like Hajiro, Hayashi, Kobashigawa, Ono, Wai and Davila, add to the great tradition of American military history, and it should be noted, and I have noted here in my extended remarks, that these men endured, along with many other Asian Pacific Islanders during the war, a climate of racism that continued to persevere, and made their contributions in a number of combat units throughout the war, men from Pacific Islands like American Samoa and Guam, people who served in the Philippine armed services under the American flag, and, of course, many who joined the regular armed forces of the U.S. and who were limited to service and transportation units.

The other soldiers who will be honored are: Staff Sgt. (later 2nd Lt.) Rudolph B. Davila, Pvt. Barney F. Hajiro, Pvt. Mikio Hasemoto (posthumous), Pvt. Joe Hayashi, Pvt. Shizuya Hayashi, Tech. Sgt. Yeiki Kobashigawa, Staff Sgt. Robert T. Kuroda (posthumous), Pfc. Kaoru Moto (posthumous), Pfc. Kiyoshi K. Muranaga (posthumous), Pvt. Masato Nakae (posthumous), Pvt. Shinyei Nakamine (posthumous), Pfc. William K. Nakamura (posthumous), Pfc. Joe M. Nishimoto (posthumous), Sgt. (later Staff Sgt.) Allan M. Ohata, Tech. Sgt. Yukio Okutsu, Pfc. Frank H. Ono (posthumous), Staff Sgt. Kazuo Otani (posthumous), Pvt. George T. Sakato, Tech. Sgt. Ted T. Tanouye (posthumous), and Capt. Francis B. Wai (posthumous).

In honoring the heroism of these Asian Pacific veterans, I am reminded of the sacrifices of all our minority veterans. Today, several weeks after Memorial Day, I would like to take a few moments to talk about the tens of thousands of minority Americans who set aside political, economic and social disenfranchisement, to answer the call to arms against the forces of tyranny.

Minorities have served in the American military since the early days of the republic and valiantly fought in every major engagement including the Civil War, Spanish-American War, WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam and the Persian Gulf.

The moment of truth for most minority veterans was solidly demonstrated in WWII. Undaunted by discrimination and racism, they endeavored to serve their country. In the beginning of the war, many minority servicemen were relegated to serve only in "rear echelon" positions or support positions during the war. They served as munitions men, truck drivers, cooks, stewards, and in cleaning and repair details. I am reminded of Uncle "Bob" Lizama, a native son of Guam who served in the U.S. Navy as a steward. His naval career spanned over 30 years including service in three major wars.

Minorities also labored in the factories and farms throughout the United States working towards the war effort. In many cases, when in combat zones, the men in these positions manned weapons and fought honorably side-by-side with white soldiers and sailors during furious engagements.

Later in the war, after tremendous lobbying efforts by minority civic leaders, combat units were established for minority populations. These brave men and women came from all walks of life but were bound by a love of the principles of duty to God and country. They lived in a separate component of American society that was defined by an unfortunate climate of prejudice. African-Americans, Hispanics, native Hawaiians, Chamorros, Samoans, Asian Americans, Filipinos, American Indians, and Native Alaskans all served honorably in many capacities with the U.S. military to combat the hegemonic forces of Germany, Italy and Japan.

In segregated units, often led by white officers, these noble men distinguished themselves in combat and proved to the entire nation that they too were willing to lay down their lives for freedom. The Tuskegee Airmen, the famed 442nd Regimental Combat Team, the 100th Infantry Battalion, the Navaho Code-

Talkers, the U.S. Navy's Fita Fita Guard (a U.S. Navy auxiliary unit in American Samoa), the 1st Samoan Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps, and the Guam Combat Patrol (a U.S. Marine Corps auxiliary unit in Guam) are just a few of the organizations where minorities fought valiantly in some of the most difficult combat assignments anywhere in World War II.

After WWII, President Harry S. Truman desegregated the U.S. military. Beginning with the Korean war, minority soldiers, sailors, and airmen have fought alongside with all Americans. Recently, Congress passed a resolution honoring all of America's minority veterans. I am very pleased to have worked with both Representative SHEILA JACKSON-LEE and Senator EDWARD KENNEDY to ensure that the Pacific Islanders were represented in the resolution's text.

Mr. Speaker, in light of the level of dedication, sacrifice and honor, that minority veterans displayed while serving in our nation's military, we must in every way possible ensure that any past instance of wholesale discrimination be addressed and corrected. In this light it may be prudent to have legislation that establishes a commission to ensure that minority veterans during the Korean and Vietnam conflicts were not denied awards for valor on account of the color of their skin or on the basis of their national origin. At the beginning of the 21st Century, we should conclusively and exhaustively rectify as many of these past racial injustices so that we can finally proceed forward in unity and in the spirit of brotherhood. The noble sacrifices of our forbearers who fought valiantly for our freedom should never go unrecognized, nor be tarnished by societal ignorance. We, the benefactors of their sacrifice owe them at least that much.

THE REPUBLICAN PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROPOSAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, the last couple of weeks have produced some of the most spectacular propaganda we have seen here in some time. It relates to the Republicans Medicare prescription drug proposal. First PHRMA, the drug industry and prescription drug manufacturers' lobbying group, launched an advertising campaign in the newspaper Roll Call and other papers claiming that a plan like the Republican proposal could cut prices by 30 to 39 percent.

By expressing their exuberant support for this plan and its alleged results, the drug industry as much as said it can comfortably weather price cuts in the 30 to 39 percent price range. If that is the case, the drug industry should do us all a favor and simply make the cuts in price. It is a lot easier than requiring seniors to go into a prescription drug coverage market that does not exist to purchase a stand-alone product that cannot stand alone.